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The Association Between Racial Group and Levels of Conservatism  
Concerning Attitudes Toward Women

Julie Chambers

April 29, 1994

Sociology Honors Thesis



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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between race and attitudes toward women , with a specific emphasis on class dynamics. Data is collected through surveys of black and white men in the town of Oberlin, Ohio. No racial differences are found on the overall attitude scale. In addition, when the variables are broken down into three categories; domestic, social and, political/leadership roles, racial differences are found only concerning social variables. Black men are found to hold significantly more traditional attitudes on the social scale than white men. Both black and white men respond less conservatively on the political attitudinal scale as compared to the social or domestic scales. Implications and recommendations for women's movements are discussed.

Special thanks to my advisors Daphne John and James Leo Walsh for the advice, support and especially for believing in me, to Marie Fabian for tirelessly checking my commas and helping me through the entire process, to Jennifer Zinn for her encouragement and to Nducu Ngugi for helping me to keep my sanity in the past few weeks.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960's sparked a fresh interest in studying the role of women in American society. During the following decade, many researchers focused their attention on attitudes held by men and women concerning male-female role definitions. Attitudes and beliefs were thought to "provide the cultural-ideological context in which relations between the sexes were acted out" (Ransford, 1983), and thus were seen as important indicators of changing sex-role ideology. Social scientists saw a shift toward greater equality for men and women, but many felt that "the ultimate objective for sustaining change rests in the shifting of the attitudes and opinions of the populace towards more egalitarian standards" (Bayer, 1975)

Studies conducted on this issue in the 1970's and 80's consistently showed males to hold a more traditional sex-role outlook than women (Gillespie and Spohne, 1987, Jones and Nagy, 1988). Despite the number of studies, virtually absent in the literature is comparative research on black and white sex-role attitudes. In fact, sex-role research on blacks has been deemed "the single biggest blind spot in existing sociology" (Hoschild, 1972). The few studies that have focused on differences between black and white women have produced inconsistent and contradictory findings, while comparative studies on black and white men are extremely scarce and equally inconclusive. If attitudes do indeed inform us about the

evolving role of women in society, then this is an area of social research that is sorely in need of further research.

This thesis will attempt to explore the relationship between racial group and attitudes toward women, by presenting and critiquing past theory and research, and by examining original data using class and other demographic controls, in order to offer recommendations for future research and policy aimed at women's issues. Due to the limited research specifically comparing black and white male attitudes toward women, Chapter 1 reviews literature on the related topic of comparative black and white family research.

The following three distinct perspectives arise out of this literature; 1) The idea that the black family is matriarchal, and thus black men are subordinate to their wives, 2) The belief that, due to economic hardship, the black family is more egalitarian than the white, patriarchal family and 3) The idea that black men are more conservative in sex-role outlook as a reaction to their unequal position with whites and white men in the social hierarchy. Class theorists, not necessarily in agreement or conflict with any of the previous three, present a fourth position which says that it is class, not race, that inherently structures society and determines social organizations, such as the family. Each of these perspectives is discussed and critiqued, theoretically and methodologically.

Chapter 2 reviews the sparse literature specifically dealing with attitudes toward women as differing among black and white men. Three studies find evidence of greater black male traditionalism, two contend that white males are more conservative, and one says that attitudes are situational by race. Each study is

presented individually, with certain aspects discussed in terms of their relation to the hypotheses of the present study.

Chapter 3 describes the theoretical orientation and the method employed in the study, including the variables used and the research design. Chapter 4 presents the findings through multiple regression and analysis of variance statistics, and the findings are discussed in Chapter 5. Using past research as a guide, policy recommendations for women's movements are offered in Chapter 6. Conclusions presented in Chapter 7 include a discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 1:

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Research Comparing Black and White Families

Related to my topic, and equally inconsistent, is literature comparing black and white family life. Due to the lack of literature specifically comparing black and white sex-role attitudes, I will first review the theories and research concerned with the structure of black and white families. Research in this area is abundant and can be broken down into three distinct categories:

- 1) Black Matriarchy/White Patriarchy
- 2) Black Egalitarianism/White Patriarchy
- 3) Hypermasculinity/White Egalitarianism

#### 1) Black Matriarchy/White Patriarchy

##### A) Theoretical Foundation

Various researchers and segments of the general public have embraced the idea that the majority of black families fall into the matriarchal family structure, while white families, seen as the norm, are more traditionally patriarchal in nature. Franklin Frazier is often times credited as the founder of this more conservative, theoretical perspective on the black family. Frazier describes the black family as structurally pathological, in having failed to live up to the European-American societal norm (Majors and Gordon, 1994). He



sees poverty and frustration in black communities, as well as a higher rate of female headed households than in white communities. Frazier determines that the lack of two-parent, male dominant families is the reason for the deteriorating conditions in black areas (Frazier, 1927).

There are three main problems that I see with his theory: 1) he fails to show proof of an actual correlation between family structure and social problems 2) he commits what is now, hopefully, a sociological faux-pas by using a Eurocentric norm as a model for another racial group and 3) While Frazier easily points out the problems with matriarchy, he never questions the effect of patriarchy on women or the society in general, he just accepts male dominance as the ideal. While many have pointed out the various problems with his approach<sup>1</sup>, this idea of a black matriarchal culture deviating from the patriarchal, white norm has been a recurring theme in sociological literature on black and white family life.

#### B) Research Conducted

Studies that support this matriarchy theory of black marriages have various commonalities. They all suppose fundamental differences between black and white marriages to be a known fact, they all presume matriarchy to be a disadvantageous structure, and they often take a very ethnocentric stance in their analyses and conclusions. (Moynihan, 1965, Blood and Wolf, 1960) Daniel Patrick Moynihan is perhaps the best known researcher who advocates the matriarchy perspective. His study for the U.S. Department of Labor,

in which he makes a case for urgent action regarding the black family, has had far reaching effects on policy and public attitude toward black Americans. In large part due to his report, the idea of a black matriarchy, whether accepted or rejected, has become an integral part of the nations' mentality.

Moynihan utilizes a sociological framework called the "tangle of pathology". The pathology period lasted approximately from 1950 to 1965.<sup>2</sup> This perspective blames the black family for the inadequate socialization of its offspring, resulting in a continual cycle of maladjusted children. Thus, the problems facing the black community are due to internal deficiencies rather than to external forces such as discrimination or economic oppression.

Moynihan says that the black family has embraced deviant moral values and structures, specifically that of female-headed households. His study cites problems that are well known in various lower-class communities; high rates of welfare dependency, illegitimate births, drug use, incarceration, unemployment and teenage pregnancy. He also witnesses a higher rate of single mothers and female-headed households than in white communities and declares this to be the source of all social problems in the black community. Charles Willie correctly points out that "Moynihan had no theoretical model of the good family structure or the appropriate family structure other than that found among whites" (Willie, 1993). Due to the lack of theory other than a eurocentric view of matriarchy, Moynihan fails to understand the complexities of black family life.

Moynihan proposes the reinstatement of black men into positions of power in the household as a starting point for the healing of the problems afflicting black communities (Moynihan, 1965).

Patricia Hill Collins is one of many social researchers to point out the flaws in this suggestion. Moynihans' solution is of reducing already limited black female power by encouraging the acceptance of patriarchy as the norm (Collins, 1989). Not only does Moynihan fail in his research to support the reality of matriarchy, but his analyses and proposals only reinforce a hierarchical, male-dominant view of family life.

Moynihan cites a study conducted by Robert Blood and Donald Wolf in support for his matriarchy perspective. The study accepts racial differences in family structure as inherent and describes female-headed households as matriarchal and therefore deviant. Blood and Wolfe find that wife-dominance in decision making is more common in black households. While this finding is greatest at the lower-blue collar class level, their graphs show significant findings through three out of four of their class categories, as well as overall. They conclude that matriarchy is a normative structure for black families across socio-economic class lines (Blood and Wolfe, 1960).

Blood and Wolfe's conclusion that the black family is significantly more matriarchal than white families is later questioned by researchers through reanalysis of the original data. It is found that while blacks do indeed score lower than whites on the male-dominance scores, both black and white families fall into the scale category between 4.0 and 6.0. This is the category, designated by

Blood and Wolfe, that signifies equalitarian decision making patterns (Hill, 1972). It seems that Blood and Wolfe, and later Moynihan, overemphasized the differences, while failing to even note the similarities in family structure between black and white families.

While I am not denying the various problems facing black and lower-class communities, nor the relative preponderance of single black mothers, it is obvious that the Black Matriarchy/White Patriarchy approach is flawed in method and theory to the point of being sociologically inadequate.

## 2) Black Egalitarianism/White Patriarchy

### A) Theoretical Foundation

The second perspective on black and white differences in family structure describes black families as relatively egalitarian in nature, compared to white families who typically engage in a male dominant structure. The theory of black egalitarianism has often been employed as a rebuttal of the matriarchy perspective. Supporters of this theory believe that because patriarchy has been accepted as the normative structure of American families, studies have confused the lack of male-dominance in black families as an indicator of matriarchy. In reality, they say, the black family structure is neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, but closer to equalitarianism in structure and practice (Staples, 1971, Staples, 1978, Willie, 1993, Hill, 1972).

Proponents of matriarchy and egalitarianism alike recognize the economic hardships confronting the majority of black families.

They both say that the black male in America faces societal discrimination that often keeps him from fulfilling the traditional, patriarchal role of provider and household head. Whereas supporters of matriarchy say that oppression has forced the black female into an abnormal position of power, supporters of the egalitarian theory say that it is precisely this racial subjugation that has reinforced an equalitarian pattern of black male-female relations (Willie, 1993).

Black women have historically worked outside the home in a greater proportional percentage than white women who have, stereotypically, engaged in the traditionally female role of housewife and mother. Thus, by necessity, black women have relied on black men and other family members to help with household tasks and child care. Rather than the sharp dichotomy between breadwinner and housewife found in white marriages, the black family tends to engage in an equal sharing of financial and household activities (Staples, 1978). Egalitarian proponents believe that the historical patterns of black male-female power sharing have become such an integral part of the black community, that they will continue to be found even as more economic opportunities open up to blacks in society (Hill, 1972).

#### B) Research

As a response to the matriarchy approach, proponents of egalitarianism have critiqued various studies that supposedly support the myth of black female dominance. I have already discussed some of the problems with the methods employed in the

matriarchy studies I cited above. (see pg. 6) Other problems include: small numbers of black respondents, a failure to account for alternative household arrangements such as extended family, and a lack of attention given to possible socio-economic differences among black and white families (Collins, 1989).

Herbert Hyman and John Reed (1966) conducted a secondary analysis of three studies which support the matriarchy theory. They find that the researchers had committed an error called "fictitious comparison" (Hyman, 1964). This is a form of researcher bias where data is recorded subjectively by the interviewer rather than through a statistical measurement.<sup>3</sup> The result is that researchers often end up applying their own views and opinions to the study, rather than allowing the data to portray an unbiased understanding of the results. In their secondary analysis of the studies, Hyman and Reed conclude that "there seems to be little evidence for any socio-psychological pattern of matriarchy peculiarly characteristic of the Negro family" (Hyman and Reed, 1966). The data, in their re-examination, shows black and white families alike to be basically egalitarian in decision-making.

Primary studies of black egalitarianism focus on black and white families of similar class categories. The idea is that, due to the far-reaching effects of the differences in social position of whites and blacks, controlling for Socio-economic status demographics is a necessity in any comparison between these two races. Due to fact that black males, in proportional percentages, come from lower economic classes than white males in our society, the differences found between black and white males could be attributed to

differences in experience rather than to racial differences. Since class differences concerning attitudes toward women have been found (Weitzman, 1975), it becomes extremely important to control for these variables when comparing two groups of unequal position in society.

A study conducted by Jerry Finn controls for education level, one common variable used in the determination of socio-economic class. He finds white men to be more traditional in domestic sex-role attitudes, with black men favoring a more egalitarian view of marriage (Finn, 1986). Similarly, two studies of lower-class white and black men find blacks to engage in a more liberal view of female roles than whites. Joan Aldous reported that equalitarianism is the normative structure for the lower-class black families, regardless of whether the wife is working or not (Aldous, 1969). Parker and Kleiner find black males, in their own self-descriptions, to report a sharing of financial and child care responsibilities over 80% of the time (Parker and Kleiner, 1966).

While studies incorporating a large amount of black respondents and controlling for class demographics are relatively rare, the black egalitarianism perspective provides the best researched and, so far, the strongest theoretical perspective concerning black and white families.

### 3) Black Hypermasculinity/White Egalitarianism

#### A) Theory

A third theory on black and white families proposes that black men are more rigid and traditional in sex-role outlook as a reaction to economic and societal emasculation. This perspective reasons that the discrimination black men experience in the outside world, and the blocking of their ability to fulfill traditional male roles, encourages an exaggerated notion of masculinity (Majors and Gordon, 1994). In simpler terms, black men take advantage of their patriarchal position of superiority in relation to black women due to their lack of power in the larger society. The result is greater traditionalism in black relationships, with white men more secure in their competence as men and thus less likely to exploit their sexual dominance.

This theory incorporates the idea proposed by various social researchers in the 1970's called "protest masculinity", or "instances of extreme forms of sex-typed behaviors on the part of some males" (Broude, 1990). These behaviors include aggression, crime, drinking and a need for instant gratification, and are a "defensive maneuver on the part of males who are in conflict about or who are insecure about their identities as males" (Broude, 1990). Where black men are concerned, theorists argue that black males are more likely to feel threatened as men and thus are more likely to engage in such destructive behavior (Oliver, 1989, Ransford, 1983).

In relating this perspective to male-female relations, William Oliver says that the acceptance of this tough-guy image, especially among lower-class black men, creates a tendency for black men to engage in a definition of manhood through sexual manipulation and conquest (Oliver, 1989). Women are seen as objects through whom a



man proves his masculinity. This can take many forms from emotional or physical domination to sexual indiscretion. It must be noted that these ideas of masculinity are by no means only relatable to black men, for evidence of this behavior can be seen across race and class in a sexually stratified society. However, proponents of the black hypermasculinity theory believe that black men, due to their lower place in the social hierarchy, are more likely to engage in male-dominance ideology as a response to their unequal position in society.

Another related perspective on black hypermasculinity has surfaced in recent decades as a result of the Civil Rights, Black Power and Black Nationalist movements of the 1960's and 1970's. As has often been the case in movements concerned with racial liberation, women in these movements were forced to play a supportive role in the struggle, and to suspend any focus on their problems as women while the issue of racial oppression was put on the front burner (Hare and Hare, 1970, Sizemore, 1973). The Nation of Islam, for example, as an integral part of the nationalist movement, openly states that women should submit to their husbands and play their natural complementary role as wife and patron (Sizemore, 1973).

While not all of the male activists of these movements subscribe to such blatantly sexist ideas of womens' roles, the voice of black women is often times stifled. The leadership is virtually always male, and the focus is on racial liberation specifically, rather than on the liberation of black people from all forms of oppression (Hare and Hare, 1970). Black men to this day have a hard time understanding the idea that black women face double and triple

oppression in society, and that any movement needs to take into account the voice of all its people in order to be successful. Robert Staples epitomizes this problem when he writes, "sex-role equality for the poorest of the poor is a meager victory at best" (Staples, 1978).

Black leaders in these movements regularly stressed the need for black men to regain positions of leadership in their communities. While this was meant as a rebuttal to the emasculation of black men by white society, in practice black women are the victims (Ransford, 1983). Rather than attempting to increase the power of all in the black community, hypermasculinity theorists say, black men often reasserted themselves in their households at the expense of already limited black female power.

Hypermasculinity among black men has been proposed through two different perspectives: 1) that racial oppression blocks black men from adequately performing traditional male roles, increases frustration and eventually leads to an alternative definition of male roles (increasingly traditional and dominant in practice) and 2) that the Civil Rights and Black Power/Nationalist movements of the 60's and 70's reinforced to black men the need to hold positions of power in their communities and households. Both of these perspectives point to societal oppression as the reason for black male traditionalism, with the Black Power perspective suggesting that black male attitudes concerning the role of women are more conservative than white men regardless of class and other demographic variables.

## B) Research

Most of the literature on this area of family research has been theoretical in nature. However, two studies do relate to the relative economic deprivation perspective and one study specifically addresses the Black Power perspective. Marjorie Randon Hershey's survey of black and white men and women study how each race ranks on masculinity and femininity scores.<sup>4</sup> She finds black men to rank significantly higher on masculinity scores than white men, with no difference found in their femininity scores. Additionally, lower SES blacks score higher on the masculinity scores than any other group of men. (Hershey, 1978). The result is that black men, overall, by self-description, identified significantly more so with traditionally masculine roles.

Clifford Broman similarly finds evidence contradicting both the matriarchy and egalitarian perspective in his study of black married couples. Broman does not use whites as a comparison so it is hard to generalize his findings for the purposes of this study. He does, however, find a basically traditional, or what is considered normative, pattern in black family life. Over two-thirds of the women report doing most of the cooking, cleaning and laundry, with only 4.5% of the men performing the majority of household chores (Broman, 1988). While this is not exactly the most indepth analysis of black family life, it is apparent that black women are not domineering matriarchs, nor are they benefitting from an egalitarian sharing of household chores with their husbands.

Two theorists that are instrumental in introducing the second perspective on hypermasculinity, that of the effect of the Black

Power movement on black masculinity, are Edward Ransford and Jon Miller. Ransford and Miller conducted a study utilizing this perspective which I will discuss in greater detail later on in the paper. (see pg.22) Since this is the only study conducted specifically in this area, however, I will go over their results quickly at this time. Ransford and Miller find black men to be significantly more conservative than white men, but only on political issues such as women's suitability for politics, and only among those identifying themselves as middle-class (Ransford and Miller, 1983). The conclusion is that the racial movements of the previous decades have indeed encouraged increased traditionalism among black males.

While the hypermasculinity approach has added an interesting perspective to the debate on black and white family life, it is overwhelmingly based in theory. Very few studies have been conducted to test the hypothesis, and thus it is impossible to generalize about the validity of the perspective. It certainly deserves further research.

#### 4) The Impact of Class

##### A) Theory

All of the theories on black and white family life assume one common belief; that differences in social position and economic standing among blacks and whites have led to differential family structure practices. The matriarchy perspective says that economic hardship has broken up the black family and encouraged deviance and female-dominance, while the egalitarian theorists say that these

same circumstances have produced out of necessity more egalitarian patterns of black relationships. The hypermasculinity approach proposes that the economic and social decimation of the black male has encouraged an exaggerated notion of masculinity among black men who are attempting to reassert their position of dominance in their families and communities.

All of these theories are based on the assumption of *class* differences between blacks and whites, yet they concentrate on *racial* differences in their analyses. Certain social scientists have seen a problem with all of these theories in that they are based in class ideology as a theoretical foundation, yet focus on racial ideology for their analyses and solutions. An example of this is Moynihan's (1965) description of matriarchy as peculiar to black families, yet he proposes an economic solution of increasing the social status of black men. Because of this discrepancy, these class-based theorists have proposed that black and white differences in family structure are in actuality related specifically to class differences, rather than due to differences in historical conditions.

The idea among class theorists is that class is the most distinguishing factor in American society. Even if all racial or sexual discrimination is eliminated, the capitalist relations of exchange that define our economic system will ensure the continuation of inequality for historically marginalized groups (Wilson, 1981). Thus, it is class oppression, often based on racial lines, but class oppression nonetheless that in actuality affects a person's lifestyle or determines such things as family structure. Class theorists do not deny differences in relative socio-economic class standing between blacks

and whites. They do, however, say that class, not race, is the single most important distinguishing factor among groups in our society. The theories of matriarchy, egalitarianism and hypermasculinity are all potentially acceptable to class theorists, but they are discussed as outcomes of differences in social standing for all races and not specifically relating to black family life.

William Julius Wilson is perhaps the best known researcher to propose the class theory. As a sociologist, he is well aware of the differences in economic standing for blacks and whites. He points out that poor blacks are especially vulnerable to swings in the business cycle. The position of black men has been weakened due to the impact of discrimination on their ability to attain stable, well paying jobs with opportunity for advancement. Wilson also points to public welfare policy as encouraging the economic and social disenfranchisement of black men. Wilson, however, says it is class, not race, that determines social relations (Wilson, 1981). Welfare policy, for example, while disproportionately affecting black families, has the same negative impact on all lower-class men. Similarly, any social structure, for the purposes of this paper the family, will be influenced by economic hardship and class differences in the same way across racial lines. In practice this means that any differences seen in family structure, while perhaps not as pronounced, will be equally apparent for white and black families in comparable socio-economic classes.

## B) Research

In a secondary analysis of four studies comparing black and white families, Willie and Greenblatt find that the only consistent differences in all of the studies are along economic lines (Willie and Greenblatt, 1978). While various family structures are found in these four studies; single-mother, extended family, male-dominant, etc., Willie and Greenblatt determine that both black and white families do not consist entirely of any one specific family form. Variation occurs in families across racial lines, due to the effect of other demographic variables. They write that their results "indicate that black families vary by social class as do white families" (Willie and Greenblatt, 1978). In effect, while each of these studies incorporate different theoretical perspectives, the result is clearly the same; class difference is the only consistent factor effecting family structure.

An example of one of the studies that Willie and Greenblatt utilizes is Delores Mack's (1974) study of power relationships in black and white families. Mack uses three separate methods to determine dominance in the relationship. While men are more dominant in all three categories, the only difference found by race or class is on the questionnaire section.<sup>5</sup> Here Mack found that lower-class husbands of both races are significantly more powerful, using verbal persuasion in changing their wives views to agree with their own, than middle-class husbands of both races (Mack, 1974). No other significant race or class differences are found. Mack determines that marital power may be context specific, but that her

study found that "class differences (at least in one context) far outweigh any racial differences" (Mack, 1974).

Class theorists also attribute family breakdown to economic hardship, rather than deviance or a lack of social organization. John Scanzoni (1975), for example, uses basic statistics to show that marriage stability is a direct outcome of income stability. As incomes, occupation and education rise, the percentage of successful marriages increases for both black and white families. Scanzoni points out that this has been a common finding in most industrial societies, where financial stability is not universal, and finds no reason to determine that black American families are any different in this respect (Scanzoni, 1975). It is the strain of economic hardship, not anything peculiar to black marriages, that effects the survival rate of many marriages.

Class theorists have been instrumental in pointing out the theoretical problems with other theories on black family life. They show the necessity in studying the impact of class differences in American society. While their evidence is far from conclusive, I believe that, due to their research, it is essential that any further studies done on blacks and white families control for class variables before doing their analyses.



## NOTES

- 1) See Patricia Hill Collins' (1989) discussion of black family life for an indepth critique of the matriarchy perspective, including the continuing presence of the myth of black matriarchy in our society and its effect on black women .
- 2) See Clovis L. White's (1991) paper on black Self-Esteem, presented at the Eighty-Sixth Annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, for a detailed discussion of the pathology period in sociological literature.
- 3) While quantitative, statistical measurement does not necessarily result in non-biased research results, subjective interviewing from an "outsider" perspective can easily produce data supporting the researcher's agenda, rather than allowing the data to portray its own results See Zinn's (1979) discussion of the insider/outsider controversy in social research.
- 4) Hershey's scores are based on traditional, and stereotypical, ideas of Masculinity and Femininity. Each respondent is asked how strongly they relate to various personality characteristics. Examples of "masculine" traits in her study are aggressive, assertive, ambitious, and willing to take risks, while "feminine" traits include compassionate, loyal, gentle and sensitive to others.
- 5) Mack studies marital dominance in three areas, yet the only class differences are found on the questionnaire section. Each partner fills out the questionnaire separately, then they are asked to fill it out as a couple. Marital dominance is recorded according to how individual discrepancies are resolved in the joint questionnaire session.

## CHAPTER 2:

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Research Comparing Sex-Role Attitudes of Black and White Men

Very few researchers have specifically studied the issue of differences between black and white men regarding sex-role attitudes. Because of this and the fact that the limited research has produced varying results, I will treat each of the five relevant studies separately.

Edward Ransford and Jon Miller conducted a study of the effects of race and sex on feminist outlooks. They rejected the "ghetto-specific" idea of black masculinity in their hypothesis, which says that "the combined impacts of race and class discrimination lead to inadequate resources to play economic provider, husband dominant role, leads to alternative expressions of masculinity" (Ransford and Miller, 1983). This view asserts that black men are more likely than white men to engage in male dominance ideology due to a societal blocking of their ability to carry out traditional masculine roles. In theory, then, this view is only relatable to lower-class black men, and can also be applied to lower-class men of other races. Ransford and Miller decide to look instead for a race specific theory on masculine ideology.

The Black Power and Black Nationalist Movements of the 1960's and early 70's undoubtedly have had a large effect on the overall black community. The movements tended to emphasize

racial oppression over sexual oppression, with black womens' role in the struggle being subordinated to that of men. The message to black men stressed the need for them to reassert their position of leadership in their communities and households (Ransford and Miller, 1983). The effect of this ideology on the sex-role attitudes of black men is studied by Ransford and Miller, who hypothesize that the impact of the movements of the 60's is an increased traditionalism among black males across all economic classes.

Ransford and Miller find that black males are indeed significantly more traditional in sex-role outlook than white males, but only on the political dimensions concerning women in leadership positions. Using the interaction effect of race and class, it is found that the lower the class identification for black men, the greater the traditional outlook concerning the political role of women. No such interaction effect is shown for white men. Ransford and Miller determine that their study supports the Black Power theory, while dispelling the more common "ghetto-specific" idea of masculinity. In testing for other areas of conservatism, the researchers find black male traditionalism to be sex-role specific. Ransford and Miller conclude that the impact of the past decades' Civil Rights and Black Power movements on black men has been a reassertion of male dominance ideology across socio-economic class.

Two other studies find similar patterns of black male traditionalism. Marjorie Randon Hershey (1978) tests the egalitarian view of black male-female relations. Although some researchers argue that economic hardship produces greater egalitarianism in black families, lower-class white males have fairly consistently

shown an exaggerated notion of masculinity in line with the ghetto-specific approach (Weitzman, 1973). Seeing a dichotomy in the research on lower-class white and black men, Hershey attempts to study sex-role views in a race-specific context. Her study incorporates a large number of black respondents and she carefully controls for variables such as class, age and education.

Hershey finds that black men score significantly higher on the Masculinity Score than white men. Additionally, the difference in scores between men and women are equally prominent for blacks as for whites even after controlling for demographic variables. Furthermore, in regard to the egalitarian view, Hershey does not find evidence that lower incomes "encourage less sex-typing among blacks and more sex-typing among whites" (Hershey, 1978). The greatest indicator of sex-role traditionalism, not surprisingly, is sex, with race and class playing a lesser role. Hershey concludes that her study adequately shows evidence contradictory to the black egalitarian view, while showing that differences between male and female sex-role ideology are a reality for white as well as black relationships.

Alan Bayer, in a study of black college freshmen, does not specifically study racial differences in sex-role attitudes, but he does find black men to be significantly more traditional than white men on the issues concerning women in his study. The questions are about a womans' place being in the home and about job equality. In both of these areas, at all of the institutions he surveyed, black men are more likely to support a conservative stance concerning female roles (Bayer, 1975).

A study by Sandra French and Steven Nock found contradictory finding to the previous three, with white men showing greater traditionalism in sex-role outlook. French and Nock use a Marxian perspective, saying that those in relative positions of power will be least likely to embrace social change (French and Nock,1981). Along these lines, they hypothesize that white men, who have traditionally held dominant social positions in relation to black men and to women, would support a more traditional outlook concerning the role of women than black men.

While French and Nock do not find consistent support for this contention across all variables, when the variables are analyzed together, white men are "less likely to express liberal views concerning the position of women" (French and Nock, 1981). White men are consistently more conservative on issues of sex discrimination and on the legitimacy of a woman's place being in the home. The study concludes that those in positions of power in society, for the purposes of this study white men compared to black men, will be more likely to endorse conservative attitudes due to a fear of status loss in the social hierarchy.

One study, while not specifically analyzing sex-role attitudes of black and white men, is worth mentioning as a possible indicator of greater white male traditionalism. Jerry Finn (1986) compares the impact of sex-role attitudes on attitudes supporting marital violence among black and white men. His focus is not on sex-role attitude differences, but rather on its correlation with marital abuse. He does, however, mention that white men score significantly higher on his

sex role sub-scale, indicating a higher level of traditionalism concerning womens roles. (Finn, 1986)

In contrast to all of these studies of differences in sex-role attitude among black and white men is a study by John Scanzoni. Scanzoni (1983) does not treat sex-role outlook as a singular concept, but instead tests his data for various possible role differences in various categories in an attempt at finding a clearer conception of black/white differences. The study finds black men to be significantly more traditional on the categories of Traditional Wife, Traditional Husband, and Religious Legitimization of Mother roles. These areas include such issues as who should take care of children, who should be the head of the family, and whether God created the institution of marriage.

Conversely, Scanzoni finds white men to hold significantly more traditional views on the categories of Wife Self-Actualization and Problematic Husband Alternatives. These include issues ranging from the importance of women holding a job to men helping out with sick children. Scanzoni theorizes that black men are more egalitarian on radical or non-traditional roles, while white men are more egalitarian or moderate on the traditional sex-role areas. Scanzoni provides a much needed perspective in this area of research. He does not attempt to prove a singular theory, but instead allows his data to provide a broader and less biased understanding of this complicated issue.

One thing is apparent in both the literature on black families and on sex-role attitudes of black and white men; there is a lot of disagreement among social scientists on these issues. It seems that any theoretical perspective can somehow be supported through research. Fortunately, the process of social research is an evolving one, and original research will inevitably come along to critique and counteract past findings. The literature review in social research is fundamental in this respect. In order to begin new research with the most knowledgeable, and hopefully least biased understanding of the area of study, a grasp of past theoretical and methodological problems is essential.

For the purposes of this study, the matriarchy perspective is rejected due to its Eurocentric theoretical base and flawed methodology. Using the other perspectives, however, one important lesson can be learned. Attitudes toward women, as differing by race, should not be looked at as a single entity. Egalitarian theorists have concentrated on the domestic sphere, whereas hypermasculinity researchers have studied the effect of racial group orientation on social attitudes and attitudes toward women in leadership positions. Additionally, virtually all of these studies have incorporated the impact of class in their theory and analyses. Because of these factors, this study will categorize attitudinal variables into three areas: social, political/leadership and domestic, and will place great importance on the effect of class in determining attitudes toward women in the three categories, as well as overall.

## CHAPTER 3:

### METHOD

#### 1) Theoretical Introduction

This study rejects the matriarchy perspective completely, yet incorporates elements of each of the egalitarian, hypermasculinity and class-based approaches. The egalitarian perspective concentrates on domestic roles, and supports the idea that black male/female relations are more egalitarian in this area. This concept will be tested in the hypotheses. Concerning political areas, Ransford's (1983) theory on greater black male traditionalism will be tested as an outcome of the nationalist movements of the sixties and seventies.

While these racial differences will be tested for, the theoretical orientation of this study supports the class-based approach that racial differences in attitudes toward women are, in reality associated with differences in socio-economic class standing. Thus, all of the hypotheses assume class has been controlled for before analyzing racial differences. Additionally, no differences by race are expected on social attitudes toward women or on the total attitudinal variables once class is entered into the multivariate equation. Class is expected to play a large role in determining attitudes toward women's roles.



## 2) Hypotheses

This study will test four hypotheses concerning the relationship between racial groups and attitudes toward women. As was explained above, the theoretical orientation of this study places a large emphasis on the role of class in determining gender role attitudes, thus each hypothesis assumes class has been controlled for when analyzing the effect of race on the dependent variables.

Hypothesis 1: There is no racial difference in overall attitudes toward women.

Hypothesis 2: Black men hold more traditional views in attitudes toward women in political or leadership roles than white men.

Hypothesis 3: White men hold more traditional views in attitudes toward women in the domestic sphere.

Hypothesis 4: There is no association between race and attitudes toward women in social variables.

## 3) Data

### A) Sample Population

Data for the study is obtained through a simple random sample of men, over the age of eighteen, living in the town of Oberlin, Ohio. One limitation of the study is clear; the results only apply to the population of Oberlin, and cannot statistically generalize to other American men. Oberlin, however, is an interesting area for study. It

is a small city (population 5,491 , census 1990)<sup>1</sup> , yet it is close to the large city of Cleveland and surrounded by small, rural towns. It is racially and economically diverse. African-Americans make up 31% of the population, whites are 65% with the remaining 4% labeled as other (Census, 1990). Economically, the population is spread fairly evenly between lower, middle and upper socio-economic classes. Occupational activity runs the spectrum from factory workers to farmers, small business owners, professors and administrators.

One distinguishing characteristic of Oberlin is the college that the town was built around. Oberlin College is important as a main employer and as an area for cultural and recreational activities in town. The college, known for it's liberal attitudes concerning social and political issues, may have had an effect on the social and political attitudes of people born here or those who choose to settle here. While the college is important to take into account when discussing the findings of the study, I believe the town of Oberlin provides an interesting environment for study in that it is racially, economically and occupationally diverse. Oberlinians are exposed to influences from big cities as well as small, rural towns. Furthermore, Oberlin demographics such as unemployment, income and housing costs parallel that of other Ohio cities and towns (CHIS, 1994). While statistically, the results of this study could only generalize to the Oberlin population, I believe that Oberlin provides an excellent example of a typical American town.

## B) Sampling Method

In an attempt at getting a racially representative sample, black neighborhoods are oversampled in the study. In order to do this, the town is split into four quadrants; NE, SE, NW, and SW. Through knowledge of the town, it is known that relative to whites, most blacks live in the southeast quadrant, many in the northeast quadrant, with proportionately few residing in the western half of the town. Because no census data exist concerning the racial makeup of Oberlin neighborhoods, my first-hand observational knowledge is used for oversampling.

After dividing the town into quadrants, addresses are obtained by street address through a Lorain County resident book (Dickman, 1993). This book is chosen because it incorporates all residents known by address and/or telephone, using utility and phone information. Such an approach certainly includes the vast majority of residents, compared to the less inclusive telephone book. A simple random sample is obtained using the systematic sampling technique separately for each quadrant. In attempting to receive back at least one-hundred and fifty surveys for analysis, five hundred names are selected from the residential listing.

Once again, due to the lack of specific information on the racial composition of neighborhoods, the percentage of surveys sent to each quadrant is determined through first hand knowledge of the town, rather than through empirical data. It is decided that forty percent, or 200, of the surveys would be sent to the southeast quadrant, the area most oversampled. A smaller oversampling is conducted in the northeast quadrant, with twenty-four-percent, or 120, of the surveys

chosen for that area. The remaining thirty-six percent is split evenly between the two western quadrants, with 18 percent, or 90, surveys selected for each quadrant. The result of this breakdown is that surveys are sent to one in three households in the southeast quadrant, one in four households in the northeast quadrant, and every fifth household on the west side of town.

The survey technique of mailing is chosen, yet due to financial constraints, each survey is hand-delivered directly to the residence, with a self-addressed and stamped envelope enclosed for returning the questionnaire. The questionnaires return quickly and steadily in the first two weeks, yet a quick look over the responses shows a major problem in the data collection. Even with the attempt at oversampling, only 13 of the 139 returned surveys come from black men. In comparing black and white men, the number of blacks represented is extremely important (see pg. 10), and generalizing from thirteen people of any group could result in faulty observations.

Fortunately, the resident book includes phone numbers, and telephone calls are then made to follow up on the surveys. The phone calls, as best as possible, are directed specifically at black men, by only calling in the eastern half of the town. After four weeks of phone calls, thirty-two black men and two more white men obtained over the phone, are included in the sample. This raises the percentage of black men in the sample to 26.2%, closer to the actual percentage of blacks in the population of 31%. While the sample is now more representative, the error that may or may not have occurred from using different sampling methods for the majority of each racial group must be acknowledged.

#### 4) Variables

##### A) Independent Variable

The independent variable for this study is, of course, racial group. Since Oberlin is overwhelmingly made up of blacks and whites (Census, 1993), anyone labeling themselves as Asian, Latino or other is excluded from the sample. Thus, the study, focuses specifically on differences in attitudes toward women among blacks and whites.

##### B) Dependent Variables

The questionnaire includes fifteen questions concerning attitudes toward women. Answers are based on a four point scale of agree strongly, agree mildly, disagree mildly and disagree strongly. After running reliability tests, which will be explained later, two of the variables are taken out as a means of analysis. The thirteen remaining dependent variables are examined individually, as a total scale, and then as divided into the following three categories: social, domestic and political.

Eight of the remaining thirteen variable are questions taken from the Spence and Helmreich Attitude Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich, 1973) The other five are designed by the researcher.<sup>2</sup> The dependent variables for the study are the following attitudinal questions:

Variable 1: Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.

Variable 2: Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

Variable 3: Under modern economic conditions, with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as cooking and cleaning.

Variable 4: A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

Variable 5: In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

Variable 6: Women should be encourage more than men not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiances.

\*Variable 7: Men should feel just as comfortable working for a female boss as a male boss.

Variable 8: Women are just as suited emotionally for politics as men.

\*Variable 9: Women who are physically abused by their spouse or boyfriend often times provoke such treatment.

\*Variable 10: A woman with children in the house should not work if her husband can support her.

Variable 11: Employment hiring and promotions should be determined solely on merit, without regard to sex.

\*Variable 12: A woman needs a man in her life, such as a father or husband, for protection or safety.

\*Variable 13: Sexual harassmtent of women on the job is an issue that needs to be taken more seriously by our society.

\* designed by the researcher, see footnote 2

### C) Control Variables

The following demographic variables are obtained and used as control variables in the study. Because the survey is only sent to Oberlin residents and specifically asks for only male respondents, controls are not needed for urban/rural or sex differences.

1) Class: Class has already been discussed as having a potentially large effect on attitudes toward women. (see pg. 16) Since the hypotheses for this study acknowledge the importance of controlling for class, the class variable is very specifically and carefully computed. It includes three sociological demographics: education, income and job status and takes into account the number of children and adults living in the house. The class variable is calculated in the following manner:

$$\text{Class} = \text{Education} + (\text{Income}/(\text{adults} + \text{children}(1/2))) + \text{Job}/3$$

This class data is then recoded into five categories according to cumulative frequencies in univariate analysis.

2) Education: The class variables are also studied separately. Education is recorded on the following five-point scale concerning level of school completed: 1) < 9 years 2) 9-11 years 3) high school degree 4) undergraduate degree 5) graduate work or higher.

3) Income: A five-point scale is also used to determine net income for the 1992 year: 1) <\$14,000 2) \$14,000-\$25,999 3) \$26,000-\$37,999 4) \$38,000-\$59,999 5) \$60,000 and higher. These

figures are estimated to fit the Oberlin population using census data and government assistance figures. <sup>3</sup>

4) Job: Each respondent is asked for their job title, which is then recoded on a five-point scale of 1) unemployed, 2) service and unskilled technical, 3) skilled technical, 4) managerial, teachers and nurses, and 5) professionals. Retired is counted as missing.

5) Adults and Children: When using the class variables individually in multivariate analysis, the number of adults and children is also taken into account in order to allow for comparison to the calculated class variable.

6) Age: Studies which I did not cite in the literature review because they do not specifically deal with racial differences have shown that increased age is associated with increasingly traditional attitudes toward women (Axelson, 1970, Welch and Sigelman, 1982). In order to control for any possible effect of age on the data, each respondent is asked for the year they were born. This data is then computed into age in years, and recoded into five categories from youngest to oldest using cumulative frequency data.

7) Church Attendance: Religion has also been shown to have an effect on attitudes toward women, with women and men alike who are more religious tending to hold more traditional attitudes toward women and women's roles in society (Jones and McNamara, 1991, Marry Morgan, 1987). Religion is controlled for according to how



often the respondent reports going to church on a five point scale ranging from once a week to never.

8) Marital Status: While I did not find any studies specifically concerned with the effect of marital status on attitudes toward women, I felt that it could be an important variable especially concerning domestic issues. The respondents are asked for their marital status which is then recoded into married or other (including divorced, separated, widowed and never married).

9) Citizenship: Since cultural differences associated with nationality have been shown to affect attitudes toward women (Braun and Chao, 1978), respondents are asked whether or not they are U.S. citizens. The two respondents who replied no are taken out of the study, because of their small representation and the fact that this study is concerned with racial differences in the U.S.

#### D) Research Design

Univariate frequency distributions are run for each variable to determine the data content and possible problem areas (i.e., the low percentage of black men responding by mail).

Bivariate analysis includes scale reliability, t-tests, correlation coefficients, and measures of association. Reliability tests are run for all the variables as a total scale as well as for the three categories of domestic, social and political issues. Spearman correlation

coefficients are computed to check for the strength of correlation between scaled variables (i.e. the individual class variables). Zero-order correlation coefficients are computed between the dependent variables and race and class variables. Cramer's V measures of association are calculated for the total variable, political variable, social variable and domestic variable by race. T-tests are run to compare the means by race for each variable individually as well as for the scaled variables.

Multivariate analysis is then performed through multiple regression and analysis of variance. The control variables are entered into the equation. Separate analysis is given to individual and scaled class variables. Multiple regression and ANOVA are compared to determine validity of findings. Significance levels are used to examine the effect of all independent and control variables on the dependent variables. The R Square statistic is analyzed to determine the explanatory power of the demographic variables on the dependent variables. Finally, eta and beta coefficients are used to examine the relative effect of each variable on the dependent variable, before and after controls.

## NOTES

- 1) The 5,491 number does not include college students. With college students, the town population is approximately 8,191.
- 2) Certain questions from the Spence and Helmreich (1973) ATW scale are not used because they seemed outdated for a survey in 1994. An example of this is "It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks". Certain applicable questions from this scale are included, along with questions designed by me including present day concerns of sexual harassment, domestic abuse and women in leadership positions.
- 3) The income figures are determined with help from Oberlin Community Services Council caseworker, Don Tatum, using government assistance and college payroll statistics.

## CHAPTER 4:

### FINDINGS

#### 1) Univariate analyses

Frequency runs provide a necessary understanding of the sample population characteristics. After mail and telephone data collection for this study, 127 white respondents (73.8%) and 45 black respondents (26.2%) are included in the study. The majority of the sample are married (68%), while the other 32% fall into the category of other (divorced, separated, widowed or never-married). The mean for church attendance is equal to 3.209, or close to four times a year, but the modal church attendance is in category five of never attending services. The age distribution runs from 19 to 90, with close to half of the respondents between the ages of 35 and 50.

The education level of respondents is very high, with a mean of 4.134 falling between undergraduate and graduate completion. This is not surprising due to Oberlin being a college town. The mean job status level is 3.717, or close to managerial level work. The median income falls in category four of \$38,000-\$59,999 with a mean of 3.376. On average, 1.85 adults and only .68 children live in respondent households.

Univariate analysis also provides a general understanding of the respondents attitudes toward women. The attitudinal scale ranges from 1 to 4, with four being the most traditional answer. Overall, respondents expressed liberal attitudes toward women; the total variable (sum of variables/n) mean falls at 1.64. The mean for social variables is 1.726, with domestic variables at 1.72 and political

variables averaging at 1.386. Of the individual attitudinal variables, the most conservative answers are given on questions concerning women working with small children (mean=2.19) and women needing male protection (1.95). The most liberal answers regard job hiring and promotions regardless of sex (1.17) and men helping with housework (1.34). While univariate analysis is not indepth analysis, these statistics do provide an interesting picture of male attitudes toward women in general.

## 2) Bivariate Analysis

The first step taken after frequencies and descriptives are run is to test the reliability of the total variable scale as well as of the social, political and domestic variable scales. Table 1 shows the results of this analysis. Reliability analysis of all fifteen variables (see pg. 34) produced a high alpha of .8403, yet item-total statistics showed a higher alpha could be produced with the deletion of the following two variables:

1) Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

2) The institution of marriage and the family, with men and women performing different tasks, was created by god.

The alpha level could be affected by the possibility that these variables do not necessarily reflect levels of conservatism concerning attitudes toward women, but rather reflect religious upbringing or some other factor. In any case, these two items are deleted from the

total variable equation, and the remaining thirteen variables are studied with an very high reliability of  $\alpha=.8505$ .

These two items are also deleted from their respective categorical scales. Thus, four items are analyzed for domestic attitudes, four items for social attitudes and five items for political attitudes concerning women. (see pg.87) All of these scales are highly reliable. The alpha for the domestic variable scale is .7085, for the social variable scale it is .6471, and for the political variable scale it is .7368.

Reliability analysis is also run to check the class scale using education, job status and income. These three variables are also found to be highly correlated and the scale produces an alpha of .8582 with item-total statistics showing the alpha would not be raised with the deletion of any of the three variables. This scale will be utilized in further analysis, yet due to the compressed nature of the scale, the three variables will also be analyzed individually in multivariate analysis to prevent any possible misinterpretation of the data.

Pearson's correlation coefficients between class and attitudinal variables produce significant correlations on all individual attitude questions except Boss and Dates (see pg. 87), with lower-class men showing a greater conservatism toward women. Additionally, class is significantly correlated with a p-value of less than .01 on the domestic, political, social and total variable scales. Correlation coefficients for race, however, produce significant correlation only on the social and total variable scales, both with a p-value of  $\leq .01$ , and black men responding more conservatively on both scales. The p-

value for domestic variables by race is  $\beta = .090$ , and for political variables is  $\beta = .133$ . From this analysis, class seems to be a larger determining factor on attitudes than race. In future analysis, to ensure validity of these results, class variables will be looked at individually and as a scale to determine the true effect of socioeconomic status on attitudes toward women.

Table 1  
Bivariate Analysis  
Reliability of and Correlation among Variables within Scales

DOMESTIC VARIABLES

Father	.3382 ***			
House	.2624 **	.3625 ***		Reliability = .7085
Rights	.5502 ***	.4516 ***	.3503 ***	
Work	Father	House		

POLITICAL VARIABLES

Boss	.3291 ***			
Harass	.2968 ***	.4522 ***		Reliability = .7368
Leader	.4315 ***	.3900 ***	.4630 ***	
Merit	.3685 ***	.1969 *	.2992 ***	.2735 ***
Politic	Boss	Harass	Leader	

SOCIAL VARIABLES

Abuse	.4131 ***			
Action	.4604 ***	.3442 ***		Reliability = .6471
Sex	.2458 **	.1280	.2804 ***	
Protect	Abuse	Action		

\*\*\* = p<.000

\*\* = p<.01

\* = p<.05

See page 87 for a listing of the attitudinal questions and copy of the survey



T-tests run on individual attitudinal variables by race provide a clearer understanding of the effect of race on the dependent variables. Using the unequal variance, two-tailed significance t-test, race is significant on five individual attitude questions with the following significance levels below .05; Abuse (.018), Action (.000), Father (.001), Protect (.000) and Sex (.048). Most striking in these results is that four of the five significant variables are from the social scale, and that all of the social variables produce significant finding by race. On all of these variables, black men are showing higher levels of conservatism concerning women.

T-tests by race on the attitudinal scales support the correlation findings, with significance levels only found on the social variable and total variable scales. The social variable significance level is  $=.000$ , while the total variable significance level is  $=.008$ . For domestic variables, race is not significant ( $=.127$ ), nor is race significant for political variables ( $=.184$ ). It is interesting to note that the racial difference on social variables could be so strong as to make the total variable scale significant, while there really is no racial difference in the majority of the attitudinal variables. For this reason, future analysis will pay closer attention to the categorical scales than to the total variable scale, in order to stay away from sweeping statements about racial differences that could be more specifically analyzed.

Due to the fact that the hypotheses of this study take into account controlling for class variables when discussing racial differences, it is impossible to draw any sort of conclusions without

multivariate analysis. However, it is clear from the bivariate findings that class and race play some role in determining attitudes toward women. The direction of the association is also clear; lower-class men and black men are showing higher levels of conservatism than middle to upper-class men or white men. The question remains as to what effect the differing economic positions of black and white men have on attitudes toward women.

### 3) Multivariate Analysis:

Preliminary analysis is run on the four scales using multiple regression and analysis of variance to determine which class variables to use. This is done to prevent using a computed class variable (discussed on pg. 35) that might not provide as much information as the education, income or job variables provide separately. Interestingly, the class variable proves a more valid instrument of measurement. Using the class variable, regression and ANOVA produce levels of significance at  $<.05$  for the exact same demographic variables on each of the four scales. When the individual class variables are used the significance levels become inconsistent and contradictory. For example, on the domestic scale regression shows only the number of children in the household to be significant while ANOVA shows race and religiosity to be significant. Similarly, on the total variable scale nothing is found to be significant using regression, and only race when using analysis of variance. These findings are not only inconclusive, but they seem to contradict previous data analysis.

Table 2  
Multivariate Analysis - ANOVA findings  
Multiple Classification Analysis of Domestic Scale by Demographic Variables

Grand Mean = 6.90

R Square = .372

<u>Demographic controls</u>	1	2
<b>Race</b>		
Black	7.49	7.24
White	6.70	6.79
	eta=.13	beta=.07
<b>Class</b>		
Low	7.78	7.36
Lower-middle	8.00	7.83
Middle	7.23	7.15
Upper-middle	6.25	6.42
Upper	5.31	5.75
	eta=.38	beta=.28 ***
<b>Marital Status</b>		
non-married	6.89	7.17
married	6.91	6.77
	eta=.00	beta=.07
<b>Church Attendance</b>		
once/week plus	8.15	7.85
1-3 times/month	7.38	7.30
4-5 times/year	6.25	6.38
holidays	7.45	7.42
never	6.02	6.19
	eta=.31	beta=.24 **
<b>Age</b>		
19-34	6.49	6.16
35-42	6.24	6.02
43-49	6.24	6.47
50-61	6.10	6.77
62-90	9.40	8.95
	eta=.48	beta=.40 ***

1 = multiple classification analysis  
    unadjusted deviation  
2 = multiple classification analysis  
    adjusted for independents deviation

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$   
\*\* =  $p < .01$   
\* =  $p < .05$

Table 3  
Multivariate Analysis - ANOVA findings  
Multiple Classification Analysis of Political Scale by Demographic Variables

Grand Mean = 6.94

R Square = .102

<u>Demographic controls</u>		1	2
Race			
	Black	7.42	7.11
	White	6.77	6.88
		eta=.11	beta=.04
Class	Low	7.76	7.46
	Lower-middle	7.50	7.35
	Middle	6.94	6.99
	Upper-middle	6.37	6.53
	Upper	6.16	6.41
		eta=.24	beta=.17 *
Marital Status			
	non-married	7.13	6.95
	married	6.85	6.93
		eta=.05	beta=.00
Church Attendance			
	once/week plus	7.11	7.13
	1-3 times/month	7.11	7.06
	4-5 times/year	6.93	6.87
	holidays	7.75	7.64
	never	6.42	6.51
		eta=.17	beta=.14
Age			
	19-34	7.47	7.22
	35-42	6.81	6.68
	43-49	6.67	6.84
	50-61	6.09	6.44
	62-90	7.64	7.44
		eta=.23	beta=.15

= multiple classification analysis  
unadjusted deviation  
= multiple classification analysis  
adjusted for independents deviation

\*\*\* = p<.001  
\*\* = p<.01  
\* = p<.05

Table 4  
Multivariate Analysis - ANOVA findings  
Multiple Classification Analysis of Social Scale by Demographic Variables

Grand Mean = 6.92

R Square = .378

<u>Demographic controls</u>		1	2
Race			
	Black	8.48	8.13
	White	6.34	6.47
		eta=.36	beta=..28 **
Class	Low	8.60	7.78
	Lower-middle	7.82	7.61
	Middle	6.85	6.74
	Upper-middle	5.94	6.40
	Upper	5.58	6.12
		eta=.43	beta=.24 ***
Marital Status			
	non-married	7.33	6.98
	married	6.72	6.89
		eta=.11	beta=.02
Church Attendance			
	once/week plus	7.33	7.16
	1-3 times/month	7.49	7.41
	4-5 times/year	6.67	6.60
	holidays	6.80	6.58
	never	6.63	6.74
		eta=.16	beta=.12
Age			
	19-34	7.09	6.43
	35-42	6.68	6.73
	43-49	5.93	6.20
	50-61	6.03	6.55
	62-90	9.19	8.94
		eta=.45	beta=.37 ***

= multiple classification analysis  
unadjusted deviation  
= multiple classification analysis  
adjusted for independents deviation

\*\*\* = p<.001  
\*\* = p<.01  
\* = p<.05

Table 5  
Multivariate Analysis - ANOVA findings  
Multiple Classification Analysis of Total Scale by Demographic Variables

Grand Mean = 20.86

R Square = .318

<u>Demographic controls</u>	1	2
<b>Race</b>		
Black	23.34	22.45
White	20.02	20.32
	eta=.22	beta=.14
<b>Class</b>		
Low	24.19	22.75
Lower-middle	23.12	22.45
Middle	21.22	21.17
Upper-middle	18.91	19.67
Upper	17.07	18.35
	eta=.39	beta=.25 ***
<b>Marital Status</b>		
non-married	21.42	21.17
married	20.59	20.71
	eta=.06	beta=.03
<b>Church Attendance</b>		
once/week plus	22.08	21.72
1-3 times/month	22.17	21.87
4-5 times/year	19.89	20.15
holidays	22.00	21.63
never	19.26	19.70
	eta=.20	beta=.15
<b>Age</b>		
19-34	21.07	19.98
35-42	19.84	19.50
43-49	19.03	19.55
50-61	18.07	19.57
62-90	26.60	25.84
	eta=.45	beta=.37 ***

= multiple classification analysis  
    unadjusted deviation  
= multiple classification analysis  
    adjusted for independents deviation

\*\*\* = p<.001  
\*\* = p<.01  
\* = p<.05

It is decided that the computed class variable will be used in all future analysis for the following five reasons: 1) there is absolutely no discrepancy between regression and ANOVA significance findings on any of the four scales when using the computed class variable 2) the R Square statistic is consistently higher with the class variable than with the individual variables 3) regression plots show small, but noticeable, movement toward greater linearity with the class variable on all four scales 4) reliability analysis produces a high alpha of .8582 for the class scale, and 5) class scales incorporating income, education and job status are common and accepted in sociological studies (Pimley, 1992). Due to the inconsistent and inconclusive findings that result from using the individual class variables, they will only be utilized to briefly discuss certain findings regarding education and income. However, all future analysis will be conducted using the computed class variable to determine what is actually affecting attitudes toward women.

Looking at the class variables individually does provide some insight into why the findings are so inconclusive. It also shows some interesting patterns in the affect of education, income and job status on attitudes toward women. A linear relationship does not exist between years of education and attitudes toward women. On each of the four scales, respondents with a high school education exhibit the most liberal views. While a large difference between the lowest and highest education levels can be seen, with less educated men answering with greater conservatism, graduate levels of education do not necessarily liberalize male attitudes toward women.

Income, also, does not produce consistent patterns on the attitudinal scales. On the political and social variables, higher income generally produces more liberal attitudes toward women. However, on the domestic variables, the lowest income respondents are the most liberal by far, with the highest income groups slightly below the grand mean and the middle income the most conservative. The same pattern emerges when the attitudinal variables are looked at as a whole, with those making under \$14,000 per year being the most liberal group. Job status is a more consistent variable, with those in professional and managerial positions showing the least traditional attitudes toward women. These findings show that the effect of income and education on attitudes toward women is complex, and deserves further attention and research.

From here on in only the computed class variable will be used in analysis. Multiple regression and analysis of variance produce consistent significance levels for demographic variables on each of the four attitudinal scales. The following is a brief overview of the significant variables for each scale: <sup>1</sup>

Domestic Variables: Class (.000), Age (.000) and Religion (.001)

Political Variables: Class (.000)

Social Variables: Class (.000), Age (.000) and Race (.001)

Total Variables: Class (.000) and Age (.000)

Class is significant on all four scales; age on the domestic, political and total scales; race on the social scales and church attendance on the domestic scale. Marital status is not significant on any of the attitudinal scales.



Tables two through five show the significance levels and R statistics related to the following discussion of these findings which will now be explained in more detail through separate analysis of each scale's results. Hypothesis 3 predicts that white men would be found to be more traditional concerning the domestic role of women. Univariate analysis shows that black men, in fact, score with greater conservatism, although not significantly so, on domestic areas. This finding remains in multivariate analysis.

Additionally, the beta coefficient shows race to only be associated with domestic attitudes at .07 on a scale of 0 to 1 after using demographic controls, compared to .13 before controls are used. While black men did score slightly higher on this scale, race can not be considered significant in determining attitudes toward female domestic roles. Hypothesis 3 is rejected; there is no racial difference applicable to the greater population on domestic attitudes.

On the domestic scale, as said above, significance *is* found on the class, age and church attendance demographic variables through both multiple regression and analysis of variance at a level of  $<.01$ . There is a consistent linear relationship between class and domestic attitudes, with lower-class men reporting more traditional attitudes. Age, similarly, produces consistent results on the domestic scale. Older men show slightly greater levels of conservatism until the oldest category of 62-90 years of age, where there is a large leap in conservatism.

While church attendance is significant, the relationship to attitudes toward female domestic roles is not at all consistent. Respondents who never attend church reported the most liberal

answers, and those who attend church once a week or more answered with the least liberal answers. However, respondents attending church only on holidays score higher than either of the other groups attending 1-3 times/month or 4-5 times/year. While religious practice does have a significant effect on attitudes toward women's domestic roles, the relationship is not particularly clear from this data.

The association for each of these three significant demographic variables to the dependent variable is moderately strong. Age holds the highest association at .48 before demographic controls and .40 afterwards. Class is associated at a level of .38 before and .28 after controls. Church attendance is the least highly associated variable with an eta of .31 and a beta of .24. While the bivariate associations are not exceptionally strong, the relatively small and steady decline across the three variables after controls are entered, shows with some certainty that the variables do independently affect the domestic variables.

The R Square statistic, showing the percentage variability in the dependent variable (domestic variables scale) explained by the main effects (demographic variables), is also only moderately high at .372. However, the F-statistic for the whole of the main effects is shown to be significant at .000. While the demographic variables entered into the equation might only partly explain what determines domestic gender attitudes, one can say with certainty that age, church attendance and class do play a part in shaping men's domestic attitudes.

On the political scale, only the class variable is shown to be significant. The significance level, for class, through regression is equal to .005; when using analysis of variance the level decreases yet still remains significant at .044. The relationship between class and political attitudes is consistently linear, with higher classes showing lower levels of conservatism. The effect of controlling for other demographic variables is relatively small. Multiple classification analysis produces an eta of .24 and a beta of .17 for the class variable. Despite the relatively weak association, the strict linearity and the significance level show class does individually affect political attitudes concerning women.

Hypothesis 2, based on Ransford and Miller's study (see pg. 22) predicts that black men will be significantly more conservative on political attitudes than white men even after controlling for class variables. Race is found to be non-significant in determining political attitudes, yet black men do score slightly higher than white men on the political scale, and the eta coefficient shows an association of .11. After controlling for class variables, however, the association is only .04 with minimal differences in mean scores. Hypothesis 2, with or without class controls, is rejected. No racial differences are found in regard to political attitudes toward women.

Marital status is completely non-significant on the political scale with an MCA association of .05 before, and .00 after, demographic controls. While religion and race are also non-significant, some interesting patterns arise. Those respondents who report never attending church are the least traditional, yet the most conservative group mean is among those attending church only on

holidays. The more frequent church attenders fall close to the grand mean. As on the domestic scale, church attendance is not a consistent factor in determining political attitudes toward women, yet the church variable is recorded in a simplistic manner, which provides little room for analyzing the true nature of this effect.

Respondents age has an interesting effect on the political variables that resurfaces on the social and total variable scales. While the oldest men have the most conservative group mean, there is not a linear relationship. In fact, the youngest men (aged 19-34) are the next most conservative group. Only in the other three groups of men, mainly middle aged, do average responses fall below the grand mean. This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail later due to the fact that it occurs on three of the four attitudinal scales, and contradicts previous literature.

The R Square statistic is extremely low for the political attitude scale. The variance explained by the demographic variables is only slightly over 10%, or .102. Additionally, this is the only scale where the F-statistic for the main effects is non-significant at .261. Obviously, while class may contribute to developing attitudes toward women in political and leadership positions, the demographic variables entered in this equation are not at all sufficient in explaining possible effects. Potential reasons for this finding are discussed later.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that no difference will be found on social attitudes between black and white men. However, the data does not support this hypothesis. Black men are shown to be significantly more conservative than white men using multiple regression and

analysis of variance with significance levels of  $<.001$ . The grand mean for the social variable scale is 6.92. Black men, on average, score at 8.13 compared to the white male average score of 6.47. The effect of race diminishes only slightly with demographic controls; the eta coefficient is .36 and the beta is .28. Race is definitely a significant contributing factor in determining male attitudes toward women's social roles. Hypothesis four is rejected.

Class and age are also significant effects on the social attitudinal scale. Lower class men, once again, show consistently greater conservatism in the social variables. The association coefficients in multiple classification analysis, however, show that controlling for other demographic variables has a large effect on the association between class and social attitudes toward women. The eta is .43 in bivariate analysis, yet only .24 when the other controls are entered. While class certainly has an effect on the social scale, the large difference between the coefficients shows that there is probably an interaction effect between class and another demographic variable in this area of attitudes.

The association is greatest between age and social variables. Controlling for other variables does not have a large effect on this association; the coefficient is .45 before, and .37 after, other control variables are taken into account. The oldest group of men holds the most conservative mean by far, with a mean of over two points greater than the grand mean, while all other age groups fall within one point below the grand mean. Once again, the youngest group of men are not the most liberal. While this phenomena is not as pronounced as with the political variables, the fact that middle age

men show lower levels of conservatism across three of the scales is a very important finding.

The F statistic on the total main effects (demographic variables) is shown to be significant for the social scale at .000. The R Square is moderately high at .378. The entered demographic variables explain 38% of the variance in the respondent answers. It is interesting to note that the R Square for the social scale is very close to the R Square for the domestic scale of .372. While this is not specifically analyzed in the data, it is possible that there is a specific interaction effect between these two attitudinal areas. One can say with certainty that race, class and age play a large role in determining male attitudes toward women's social role.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that there will be no racial difference in overall attitudes toward women after class controls. This is supported by the data. The significance level for race using regression is .151 and using ANOVA is .091. The mean difference between the two racial groups is 2.13, after controls, with a grand mean of 20.86. While black men do score higher on the overall attitudes, the beta coefficient is only .14 and the association is non-significant.

Marital status and church attendance are also non-significant in determining overall attitudes toward women. Married men exhibit slightly more liberal tendencies, yet the association is minimal with an eta of .06 and a beta of .03. Respondents who report never attending church are the most liberal on overall attitudes, yet the other findings are not consistent or linear. The middle group of 4-5 times a year is the second least conservative. Those attending

church one to three times/month are the most conservative group, scoring higher than those attending church once a week or more. These inconclusive findings are apparent across the four scales and show that religious practice, in the simplest terms, does not necessarily determine attitudes toward women.

Class and age are found to be significant in determining overall attitudes toward women at levels of  $<.001$  in both multiple regression and analysis of variance. On the class variable, there is a consistent increase in liberal attitudes as socio-economic class increases. With a grand mean of 20.86, there is a difference in the mean scores between the lowest and highest class of 4.30. This pattern is shown before and after other demographic controls. The association between class and attitudes, however, greatly diminishes in multivariate analysis. The eta coefficient is .39, but the beta coefficient is only .25. The association and direction of the association is clear for the effect of class on overall attitudes toward women, yet the large effect of other control variables shows that class is, at least partially, interconnected with other demographic effects.

Age produces the highest and most consistent association of the demographic variables at .45 before and .37 after control are entered into the equation. The oldest group of men in the survey show a group mean of almost five points above the grand mean of 20.86. All other age groups fall below the grand mean in their responses. It is shown that those men above retirement age are significantly more traditional in overall attitudes than younger men. However, as discussed before, age is not linearly associated with attitudes toward

women. The three middle groups of men are very similar in outlook of about 1.3 point below the grand mean, yet the youngest group of men fall very close to the overall mean. Previous studies have shown greater liberalism with younger age, and this contradictory finding is certainly interesting. It seems, however, that the significance of age is largely determined by the oldest group of men being extremely conservative. While the total attitudinal variable scale is highly affected by age of respondent, this is a finding that seems to relate only to the oldest members of the population.

The amount of variance explained by the demographic controls on the total attitudinal scale is 32%, or .318. The F statistic shows a significance level of .000 for the main effects of race, marital status, church attendance, class and age. There are obviously important factors that have been overlooked in determining overall attitudes toward women. While class and age certainly contribute to the formulation of attitudes, the moderate R Square finding shows that a great deal remains to be learned about male attitudes toward women.

Using multivariate analysis, three of the hypotheses are rejected and one is accepted. Black men are not significantly more conservative in political areas of attitudes toward women, and white men are not significantly more conservative in domestic attitudes toward women. A significant difference is found on the social attitudinal scale with black men showing greater conservatism. No significant difference is found in the attitudes as a whole by race. Hypothesis 1 is accepted and Hypotheses 2-4 are rejected.



## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Three findings are very important to discuss in terms of male attitude differences by race when controlling for class and other demographic variables. The first is that no racial differences are found on attitudes concerning the political or leadership role of women. Second, no racial differences are found on domestic areas of attitudes toward women.. Third, black men are found to be significantly more conservative on social issues than white men. These three findings contradict not only the hypotheses of the study, but also the limited previous research on this area.

### 1) Political/Leadership Roles

This study finds no support for Ransford's theory of hypermasculinity among black males in political, or leadership, roles for women. Ransford believes that the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 60's and 70's enforced the idea that black men need to regain a position of leadership in their families and communities, which thus increased black male conservatism concerning women in political positions. (see pg. 22) No such difference is shown in the Oberlin population in political attitudes throughout both bivariate and multivariate analysis.

Class is the only significant demographic variable on the political attitudes. Lower-class men are consistently more conservative on this scale. This finding contradicts the idea that

people in socio-economic positions of power are the least likely to support societal changes that could jeopardize their social standing (French and Nock, 1981). In fact, upper-class men are significantly less conservative than lower-class men concerning women attaining equal opportunities in leadership .

This theory, however, can be applied to my data in another way. If men are, indeed, threatened by the economic competition of women (Braun and Chao, 1978), then the political scale scores can be interpreted as meaning that lower-class men feel this threat the most. Perhaps, lower-class men have more reason to see their job or income level as unstable, and thus are more likely to view competition of any sort in a negative light. While demographic variable are not shown to be a large indicator, class variables should certainly be included as researchers attempt to find the actual factors determining political attitudes toward women.

The most important findings from the political variables are really 'non-findings'. Class is the only significant variable, and it is associated with political attitudes only 17% of the time. (see chart pg. 47) The R Square is extremely low at .102. Demographic variables of age, church attendance and class are associated with political attitudes at between .14 and .17 using multiple classification analysis, but a large portion (almost 90%) of the factors determining political attitudes toward women are unaccounted for in this study. Conclusions are difficult using the control variables. Welch and Sigelman (1982) found similar patterns in their study of male attitudes toward women in politics. They found no significant

differences in attitudes by race, religiosity, marital status, or even gender.

One interesting finding, however, is shown in univariate analysis. The mean score for all respondents on the political scale falls well below either the domestic or social scales (1.386 compared to 1.720 and 1.726 respectively). One possible explanation for this is the increasing representation of women in high-profile, political positions (an example being Attorney General, Janet Reno). Thus, regardless of socialization in the home and among peers, women in leadership positions are providing a positive illustration of female political potential. If this is true, as women begin to occupy and excel in positions of leadership in greater numbers, remaining attitudes of male political superiority will certainly decline over time.

Holland and Andre (1992) similarly found greater traditionalism in social attitudes compared to political attitudes in a study of college students. Their explanation of this phenomenon lies in the greater success that the Women's Rights Movement has had in public over private areas of life. While political attitudes have been greatly affected by the Movement, they say, it has not had as large a success in changing differential socialization of male and female children or in shaping the role models portrayed on television and in households. This results in a greater acceptance of women in leadership positions, yet "a lag...in the development of less traditional social attitudes toward women" (Holland and Andre, 1992). Apparently, while political attitudes toward women are changing due to their public nature, the areas of social and domestic attitudes toward women warrant further attention.

## 2) Domestic Variables

Most importantly, for the purposes of this study, there is no difference found by race concerning attitudes toward female roles in the domestic sphere. This contradicts the egalitarian view of black family life (see pg. 8), which says that historical conditions of economic hardship for blacks produces a pattern of greater egalitarianism in domestic relations as compared to whites. Perhaps a racial difference in domestic attitudes never existed, but if past egalitarian researchers were correct, this study shows that the previous racial gap concerning female domestic roles is statistically extinct.

Because this is not a longitudinal study, it is impossible to tell which way attitudes are shifting, if at all. On the domestic variables, however, two possibilities emerge using the egalitarian perspective; first, that black men have become more conservative over time, or second, that white men have become more egalitarian to parallel black males. Regardless, both black and white men show greater conservatism in domestic areas than political areas. Additionally, the most conservative overall response in the individual attitudinal variables concerned women with children working outside the home. Clearly, the attitudes in domestic areas, for both black and white men, deserve further attention.

## 3) Social Variables

As mentioned before, black men score significantly higher than white men on the social attitudinal scale. This not only negates Hypothesis 4 of the study, but contradicts past theoretical

perspectives of black scholars (King, 1973, Staples, 1971). The social scale deals with issues of women needing protection, female sexual activity, abuse of women, and women's freedom of action. (see pg.) King (1973) points out important historical facts distinguishing black and white women, varying from participation in the labor force to the idea of beauty and femininity. She argues that "America has never placed the African-American woman on a pedestal, nor provided her with protection or security" (King, 1973). Economic hardship and racial oppression, then, has encouraged less sex-typing among black Americans. King's theory falls along the lines of the egalitarian perspective. Robert Staples, similarly, argues that black relationships are more egalitarian concerning social attitudes. He writes that black men "do not have a history of suppressing the sexual expression of ... their women" (Staples, 1971).

From the works of Staples and King, one could predict more liberal opinions among black men concerning social attitudes toward women. However, this is not supported in the present study. In fact, social attitudes are the only area in which black men are significantly more conservative than white men. One possible explanation for this is an idea similar to Ransford and Miller's idea of hypermasculinity. While Ransford and Miller concentrate on political attitudes, their interpretation of black male attitudes could shed some light on this issue. As I discussed earlier, the Black Power and Civil Rights Movements encouraged a strengthening of the black male position in society. Perhaps, male strength is seen as the ability to protect and take care of a woman. Under slavery, black men could do little to protect black women from rape and abuse. Later, economic hardship

and racial oppression made it difficult for black men to adequately support a family on their own. The greater conservatism seen today, among black men, could be a response to these historical conditions. While this reaction is certainly understandable, the movement toward greater traditionalism on the part of black men is not only oppressive, it negates a history of egalitarian practices in social areas.

#### 4) Total Variables

While the findings do support hypothesis one, which states that statistically significant racial differences will not be found on the total attitudinal variable scale, I feel that it is more important to look at racial differences in categorical areas. (see pg. 27) However, there are consistent patterns for other demographic variables across all four attitudinal scales that can be best discussed through analysis of the total variable data. For example, marital status is non-significant on each of the four scales and contributes little, if any, explanatory power to the main effects.

Class is perhaps the most important variable in determining attitudes toward women. Across all three categorical scales, as well as the total attitudinal scale, class is significant with lower-class men showing greater levels of conservatism. This certainly lends support to class-based theorists who believe that class orientation and not race ultimately determines societal attitudes (Willie and Greenblatt, 1978, Mack 1978). One possible explanation for this is that lower-class men exert an exaggerated notion of masculinity and engage in male dominance ideology as a reaction to their subordinate position in society.<sup>2</sup> Or, possibly, the women's movement has not sufficiently

incorporated the interests of lower-class women or engaged lower-class women in the struggle to effectively change lower-class male attitudes. Class remains an important factor in determining overall attitudes toward women.

The church attendance variable shows an interesting pattern across all the scales, although it is only significant on the domestic scale. While those respondents who report never going to church consistently rank as the most liberal, the relationship is not linear. For example, the ANOVA tables show that men going to church 1-3 times/month and only on holidays (the second and fourth groups on a five point scale), are the most conservative in all the attitudes. It seems that the relationship between church attendance and attitudes toward women is a complicated one. Certainly, more indepth analysis is needed to determine the actual association.

Age, similarly, shows a consistent but non-linear relationship with attitudes toward women. Men over 62 years of age are significantly more conservative on the domestic, social and total variable scales. However, the youngest age group of men can not be deemed the most liberal. Consistently, men in the three middle-age groups between 35 and 61 years of age, respond with the least traditional answers. This could indicate a lessening of the power of women's movements since the 1970's, or a sort of a "backlash" against female liberation among young men. While the mean differences are not large between men aged 19-34 and the middle-aged age groups, this data could indicate an increasingly conservative pattern among young men that would be extremely detrimental to future generations of women.

## NOTES

1) All of the significance levels reported in multivariate analysis, if not specifically stated as regression statistics, are taken from multiple classification analysis in ANOVA. This is because a regression plot of the political variables shows the relationship between demographic variables and political attitudes is not linear.

2) This idea is similar to the hypermasculinity theory, however it relates specifically to class differences rather than to racial differences.



## CHAPTER 6:

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1) Private vs. Public Sphere

This study sheds light on some specific problem areas confronting women's liberation. Research on male/female attitudes and behavior can be an important guide for determining policy and program in women's movements. From the findings of this study, I would agree with Holland and Andre's (1992) conclusion that the Women's Movement has not had as much success in the private sphere of gender relations as it has had in the public sphere. Respondents showed greater liberalism in the political attitudes dealing with women in positions of public leadership than in either the social or domestic variables.

Interestingly, the R Square is almost identical for the domestic and social scales (.378 and .372 respectively). While a significant correlation can be found between each of the attitude scales, the Spearman coefficient is highest between the social and domestic scales at .6885. This shows an interaction effect among social and domestic issues concerning women. Possibly this stems from socialization in the private sphere. Whereas political attitudes are shaped through positive public role models and greater contact with women in leadership positions, domestic and social attitudes are shaped, in large part, through household socialization and familial norms (Holland and Andre, 1992). In terms of policy, movements concerned with women's issues should attempt to focus on the

private sphere of women's lives. This could take place in many areas, from domestic abuse intervention to educational programs and organizations for young girls. Regardless, it is important to remember that attaining equal opportunity in the public sphere does not necessarily indicate overall female liberation.

## 2) Black Female Liberation

As a white female researcher, I hesitate to put forth specific policy proposals concerning the racial differences found in social variables. Instead, I will go over some of the dialogue among black female social scientists in regard to social attitudes toward women. There is a discussion among black and white women alike concerning the dual effects of racial and sexual discrimination. The disagreement tends to center around which of these two forms of oppression should take precedence in the struggle for liberation (Hare and Hare, 1970, Almquist, 1975, Hershey, 1978, King, 1973).

Many black women have written that the fight against racial oppression must necessarily come first because it is "black people's First Burden" (King 1973). Due to historical differences of social standing among black and white women, an inclusive women's movement is only possible once all women are on equal footing in society (Hare and Hare, 1970). Often, women who support this perspective, tend to down play and even support acts of sexism in their lives. Hare and Hare (1970) exemplify an aspect of this with their assertion that "it is necessary to be patient with black men whenever they engage in symbolic assertions of manliness. (Black women) must not dominate but merely assist strongly". While I feel

that such statements are extremely detrimental to the overall liberation of black women, I also feel it is necessary to take into account that different historical conditions will inevitably result in different priorities and concerns for black and white women.

Black and white women will not always have the same view as to what is sexual liberation. In regard to social attitudes toward women and the greater levels of black male conservatism, it is possible that certain black women want to be put up on a pedestal and protected. While this kind of treatment may not be liberating, it could be a welcome relief from a history of self-reliance and economic hardship. I have heard many times, in conversations about black and white female differences, that you will never hear a black woman complain when a door is opened for her.

In other areas, black and white women's priorities seem almost contradictory. An illuminating quote from one black woman on this issue goes as follows, "The things white women are demanding liberation from are things we've never experienced yet. How many black women stay home bored with kids while husband is off earning money?" (Hare and Hare, 1970). When considering how little relevance many white women's concerns have for black women, a universal woman's movement seems a virtual impossibility.

Certain female researchers have questioned the legitimacy of this perspective. Using quantitative analysis of occupational and economic data, Elizabeth Almquist (1975) argues that sexual oppression is a larger factor in the labor force than racial oppression for black women. Almquist shows that income and occupation level disparities are greater by sex than by race. She goes on to cite

literature showing that black and white women hold similar sex-role ideologies and concerns. She concludes that the women's liberation movement "cannot afford to be divided along racial lines" (Almquist, 1975). Another study, testing the black egalitarian theory, concludes that "sex-role egalitarianism, far from having been achieved among blacks, is a policy question that remains relevant to both races" (Hershey, 1978).

None of the theorists on either side of this disagreement would argue that black women do not face a double burden of oppression. It has become a question of which should be prioritized, racial or sexual discrimination, and of where we, as women, disagree on issues of liberation. This dialogue, with equal participation by women of all races, is essential in the attempt at creating a movement that benefits and liberates all women while taking into account different concerns and histories. I feel strongly, that it is not my place to tell black women what is oppressive for them. For the purposes of this study, then, I will merely report the findings as they differ by race, and say that I believe that attitudinal studies can be important guides for us as women in determining how the struggle shall proceed.

## CHAPTER 7:

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 1) Limitations of Study

The following limitations of this study must be acknowledged and will be discussed in some detail: A) The sampling method and ability to generalize results B) The explanatory power of the main effects and C) The correlation between attitude and action.

##### A) Method

The most important limitation of the study is the differential sampling methods used for the majority of black and white men. Due to the low response rate from black men through the mail, follow-up surveys were administered over the telephone in the oversampled neighborhoods. While all those interviewed by phone were men chosen through simple random sampling of Oberlin, the different methods potentially affected the responses. Speaking one on one with a female interviewer who knows your name is very different than anonymously responding to a survey through the mail. It is hard to say what specific effect this had on responses, but the potential bias warrants recognition when analyzing the data.

Secondly, the data was collected from a very specific group of people; black and white men, over the age of eighteen, living in the town of Oberlin, Ohio. Different results may be found in larger cities or smaller towns, in non-college towns, or among different racial

groups. The data certainly shows interesting racial and class patterns in attitudes toward women, yet generalization of the data outside of Oberlin is not possible.

While it is important to remember that attitudes are not constant but continually redefined through experience and social norms, past research can provide a necessary foundation for drawing conclusions and policy recommendations. Certain findings which support past research (such as the relatively conservative responses on social areas as compared to political areas), deserve great consideration. However, newer findings such as greater black male conservatism concerning social issues need further and more specific research to determine the reasons for the finding and implications of the research.

#### B) Validity of Study:

Another reason past research is important is in determining what factors to look at in regard to the subject of study. The objective is to explain as much as possible about the research area, and the results of past studies can help in deciding potential effects. The less researched an area is, the harder it is to determine what specifically affects variance in the independent variable. Due to the limited research concentrating on attitudes toward women as differing by race, the explained variance in this study is moderately low, and leaves much unaccounted for.

The R Square statistic shows that overall, over 30% of the variance in answers can be explained through the entered demographic variables of race, class, age, marital status and church

attendance. The R Square is closer to .40 for the domestic and social scales, yet only .102 for the political scale. It seems that demographic variables play only a small role in developing attitudes toward women in political or leadership roles. Other potential factors, such as socialization and positive role models, have already been discussed.

More recent research has attempted to determine additional reasons for variance in attitudes toward women. Social psychologists have proposed a relationship between self-esteem and attitudes toward sexual harassment and domestic abuse (Malovich and Stake, 1990, and Neidig, Friedman and Collins, 1986). They find that men with higher self-esteem view sexual harassment in a more negative light and respond more sensitively to victims of sexual harassment than those with low self-esteem (Malovich and Stake, 1990). Additionally, men with low self-esteem are found to be more conservative on attitudes toward domestic abuse and are significantly more likely to engage in such abuse (Neidig, Friedman and Collins, 1986).

Another psychological explanation for determining attitudes toward women has to do with locus of control. Terpstra and Baker (1986) found men with internal locus of control to perceive less sexual harassment in given situations than those with external locus of control. Furnham and Karani (1985), on the contrary, found men with an external locus of control reporting more conservative attitudes toward women in general. While the evidence is far from conclusive, there does seem to be an association between locus of control and attitudes toward women that deserves further attention.

Other explanations deal with the relationship between educational experiences and attitudes toward women. The gender and feminist outlook of high school teachers has been shown to have a small, but significant, influence on the sex-role attitudes of students (Zulich, 1986). Similarly, taking an introductory women's studies class in college has been shown to significantly decrease levels of sexist attitudes by the end of the semester for both male and female students (Jones and Jacklin, 1988). These studies reveal that issues of sexism and feminism are not being given enough attention in the lower levels of school. This is a tangible area where strides could be taken to lower levels of sexist attitudes as a whole, by incorporating women's issues into school curriculums at all grade levels.

Houseworth, Peplow and Schirer (1989) found that men who participate in athletics, both in contact and non-contact sports, hold more traditional attitudes toward women than non-athletes. Another study, focusing on incarcerated juveniles, found that first-born children hold significantly more conservative attitudes toward women than later-born children (Roundtree, et al, 1990). Ma, Ma, and White's (1986) study of attitudes toward women in managerial positions shows a significant correlation between these attitudes and mother's education level and occupational status. In the future, studies should incorporate these various factors, as well as demographic variables, as main effects to determine their relative significance and to try to develop a model which explains a greater percentage of variance in attitudes toward women.



### 3) Attitudes as predicting behavior:

The question remains as to what attitudes really tell us about women's place in society. Do traditional attitudes really stop women from attaining equal footing at work or in the home? Do attitudes toward women inform us as about interpersonal relations between men and women? Certain theorists believe that attitudes do not predict action. Terpstra and Baker (1986) found that liberal attitudes toward women does not indicate an increased ability in men to identify cases of sexual harassment. Neidig, Friedman and Collins' (1986) study of male service members showed that attitudes toward women are not a significant indicator of men engaging in domestic abuse. Sattem, Savells, and Murray (1984), similarly, found that sex-role stereotyping is not significantly correlated with rape. These studies certainly question the legitimacy in solely studying attitudes toward women.

Other researchers see attitudes as the foundation for behavior (Finn, 1986, Malamuth, 1989). They theorize that any social change toward equality will only be sustained through supportive attitude change. Attitudinal studies can "also offer some insight into where the pockets of resistance to women's equality may be found" (Bayer, 1975). I feel that attitudes play an important role in contributing to the oppression of women. Conservative attitudes could certainly effect the hiring practices of bosses or the power dynamics in domestic affairs. One must, however, keep in mind that attitudes do not necessarily always predict actions. If possible, future studies of attitudes toward women should attempt to examine behavior,<sup>1</sup> as

well as attitudes to gain an overall understanding of issues confronting female liberation.

## 2) Concluding Comments: Where Do We Go From Here?

Attitudinal studies can provide a basis for determining where women's movements should focus their attention. The findings of this study make clear the fact that further consideration must be given to the private sphere of women's lives. This private sphere is an area in which far less progress has been made as compared to the public sphere. Because of their private nature, domestic and social attitudes about women are changing at a substantially slower rate than the more public political attitudes. This cannot be ignored, and I take this as an indication that the women's movement should place greater emphasis on issues of socialization and role-modeling in the private sphere.

I would also suggest a movement away from racial ideology concerning attitudes toward women. The literature review shows past theoretical perspectives and research to be contradictory and inconclusive. Additionally, aside from the social variables, significant racial differences are not found in this study. While I do not deny the fact that differences in history and experience may result in different cultural and social practices among blacks and whites, it is apparent that racial group orientation is not associated with attitudes toward women in a consistent manner. Therefore racial ideology should not be used as the foundation for theory and research in this area.

I believe that future research concerning attitudes toward women should concentrate on the impact of class in theory, analyses and recommendations. Socio-economic standing has proved a fairly constant effect across past research, as well as in my findings. Further study of the individual and relative impact of education, income and job status is needed. Because lower-class men, both black and white, show greater levels of conservatism concerning women's issues, those involved in women's liberation movements should actively attempt to incorporate lower-class women and their interests into the struggle. Incorporating these interests into the policy and program of women's liberation organizations would be a major step toward the creation of a truly inclusive movement that transcends boundaries of race and class.

## NOTES

- 1) Delores Mack's (1974) study of marital dominance is a good example of research studying both attitudes and behavior.

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### Preliminary Questions

- 1) Which of the following groups best describes you?

Black\_\_\_\_\_ White\_\_\_\_\_ Asian\_\_\_\_\_ Latino\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

- 2) How often do you attend religious services?

Once a week or more \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3 times a month \_\_\_\_\_

4-5 times a year \_\_\_\_\_ On holidays \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Are you a United States citizen? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

- 4) What year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) What is your marital status?

married \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_ separated \_\_\_\_\_

widowed \_\_\_\_\_ never married \_\_\_\_\_

- 6) If you are currently employed, what is your job title?

Job \_\_\_\_\_ Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) What was your household income in 1992 before taxes?

Under \$14,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$14,000-\$25,999 \_\_\_\_\_

\$26,000-\$37,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$38,000-\$59,999 \_\_\_\_\_

\$60,000 and higher \_\_\_\_\_

- 8) How many people live in your household?

Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Children under 18 \_\_\_\_\_

9) Please mark an X next to the education level you have completed.

8 years or less \_\_\_\_\_ 9th-11th grade \_\_\_\_\_

High school graduate \_\_\_\_\_ Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate school and higher \_\_\_\_\_

**You may now begin the questionnaire below**

**Instructions:**

The statements listed below describe attitudes toward the role of women in society that different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (A) agree strongly, (B) agree mildly, (C) disagree mildly, or (D) disagree strongly. Please indicate your opinion by marking an X on the line next to the appropriate answer.

\* Remember - this survey is only to be filled out by a male member of the household!

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
agree strongly	agree mildly	disagree mildly	disagree strongly

1) Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day. (VARNAME=LEADER, SCALE=POLITICAL)

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers. (RIGHTS, DOMESTIC)

\_\_\_\_\_

	(A) agree strongly	(B) agree mildly	(C) disagree mildly	(D) disagree strongly
3) Under modern economic conditions, with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as cooking and cleaning.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(HOUSE, DOMESTIC)			
4) A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or have quite the same freedom of action as a man.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(ACTION, SOCIAL)			
5) In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(FATHER, DOMESTIC)			
6) Women should be encouraged more than men not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiances.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(SEX, SOCIAL)			
7) Men should feel just as comfortable working for a female boss as a male boss.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(BOSS, POLITICAL)			
8) Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(DATES, SOCIAL)			
9) Women are just as suited emotionally for politics as men.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(POLITIC, POLITICAL)			
10) Women who are physically abused by their spouse or boyfriend often times provoke such treatment.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(ABUSE, SOCIAL)			

	(A) agree strongly	(B) agree mildly	(C) disagree mildly	(D) disagree strongly
11) A woman with children in the house should not work if her husband can support her.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(WORK, DOMESTIC)			
12) Employment hiring and promotions should be determined solely on merit, without regard to sex.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(MERIT, POLITICAL)			
13) A woman needs a man in her life, such as a father or husband, for protection and safety.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(PROTECT, SOCIAL)			
14) The institution of marriage and family, with men and women performing different tasks, was created by God.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(GOD, DOMESTIC)			
15) Sexual harassment of women on the job is an issue that needs to be taken more seriously by our society.	_____	_____	_____	_____
	(HARASS, POLITICAL)			

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey. Please just send it back, using the enclosed envelope, to J. L. Chambers at M.P.O. Box 0526, Oberlin, Ohio 44074. Your help is greatly appreciated!